

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **AUG 18 1983**
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Morss Homestead/Federal City Homestead

and/or common

2. Location

street & number State Route ^{NY 23} 23, Box 25B not for publication

city, town Red Falls vicinity of

state New York code 036 county Greene code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Steven and Janet Snyder

street & number 130 Cedar Street East

city, town Fleetwood, New York 10552 vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Greene County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Catskill state New York

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Greene County Planning Dept. has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date March, 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records Greene County Planning Department

city, town Cairo state New York

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>NR</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Morss Homestead is located in the hamlet of Red Falls in the Town of Prattsville, Greene County. Situated on New York State Route 23, the structure faces south towards Batavia Kill. The six-acre plot is bounded on the east by a small brook, which also runs through the property approximately 250 feet behind the house. A stone wall delineates the eastern and northern boundaries. The site is surrounded by farmland and woods. The nominated property consists of the main structure, a barn, carriage house, and privy. All are considered contributing structures within the nomination. Nestled in a valley between two mountain ridges, the homestead was situated to provide an imposing view from the road and to allow an unobstructed view of the mountains to the north and south. The foliage was arranged to camouflage the barn and outbuildings from the main road and trees were placed along the perimeters of the lawn to enhance the formal approach to the temple-front structure.

The Greek Revival frame structure is supported on coursed rubble foundation with top courses composed of brick and vertical slate slabs. The main portion of the homestead (west side) consists of a rectangular, two-story structure. This portion is much more richly ornamented and of finer workmanship than the L-shaped, one and one-half story east portion.

The facade of the main portion of the house features a pediment with raking cornice and a lunette with keystone in the tympanum.

The three-bay facade is divided by two-story, square pilasters which support a full entablature. Horizontal tongue and groove siding was used to produce a smooth temple front on the facade with clapboard on the other elevations. Both portions of the house have pilaster corner boards. The facade is distinguished by a recessed portico in the left bay which features two Ionic columns supporting a flat entablature. Twin engaged columns flank the portico entrance. The paneled entry door is framed by pilasters and sidelights with wood grillwork.

The east portico is more deeply recessed and of broader proportions than the west entry. Four square columns, similar to those at the west portico, support a flat entablature. Small frieze windows above the portico, covered by scrolled grillwork, admit light to an upstairs room. All other windows are six-over-six paneled double-hung sash with pediment-shaped window heads. Original shutters were removed at some point in the early twentieth century.

Other elevations of the house are largely without ornamentation. The north (rear) elevation of the west portion of the house features two nine-over-six-paned double-hung sash windows in the gable end and a rear door to the privy, which was blocked in the early twentieth century. The (north) rear elevation of the east portion of the house originally included a large barn-like area with wooden doors on the first floor.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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date entered

Morss Homestead, Red Falls, NY, Greene County

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page

2

In the 1950's this area was converted to a garage and modern doors were added. The second floor remained unaltered with six-paneled double-hung sash windows flanking a vertical plank door.

The first floor of the west portion of the house consists of a front and rear parlor, with entry hall and stairway at the west. A small room at the rear of the back parlor was once accessible from both the hallway and parlor, but hallway access was blocked in the 1950s to accommodate a closet. The stairway, with hand-cut newel posts and balusters, leads to what was originally a large upper foyer which opened onto several bedrooms. Presently it serves as the living area of a small apartment which was divided from the rest of the house in the 1960s. All of the original walls, consisting of plaster and hand split lathe construction, were retained during the alterations. The first floor of the east portion of the house consists of a large foyer which leads to both parlors and several other rooms. This section of the house has an unembellished stairway leading to the second floor.

Originally, the house was designed with five working fireplaces and one mock fireplace. Presently, only two remain functional and one (the kitchen fireplace) has been covered. The two parlor fireplaces feature fluted Ionic pilasters supporting elegantly carved entablatures with trabeated mantelpieces. The large double doors dividing the parlors and all of the door and window surrounds have trabeated lintels and sills styled to match the chimneys. Remodeling efforts revealed that interior adjustments were made to the walls and doors to accommodate the carved lintels and mantels which were imported to decorate the rooms. Recent interior alterations have also revealed the presence of the original Greek Revival style wallpaper which features a pattern of Greek urns wreathed by olive leaves and flowers.

The full attic over the west portion of the house exhibits the massive hemlock timber framing pinned with wooden pegs and interlocked with rabbeted joints. The roofs over both portions of the structure consist of original wood shingles overlaid with asphalt shingles.

The Morss Homestead was built and operated as a dairy farm until 1956. The complex includes several outbuildings to the rear (north) of the property which survive from the nineteenth century and which contribute to the property's significance. A two and one-half story, clapboard bank barn is distinguished by its sliding doors, hand hewn timber framing, and large loft entrance. A small one-story, gable-roofed clapboard creamery retains its original hardware. A natural brook which runs along the rear of the barn, creamery and carriage house

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**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Morss Homestead, Red Falls, NY, Greene County

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page 3

served the dual purpose of supplying water for livestock and cooling the milk, which was placed in a recess in the creamery floor. Directly to the rear of the house is a clapboard privy with a pedimented gable roof, wide board entablature, and narrow pilaster corner boards. The original two-paneled door is flanked by ventilator panels. The privy, creamery and barn date from the construction of the house C.1830.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates c. 1820 **Builder/Architect** Burton Morss

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Morss Homestead is architecturally significant as a distinctive and unusually intact example of early 19th century farm complex. Built c. 1830, the Greek Revival style structure is distinguished by the imposing proportions and conspicuous use of finely crafted detail that reflect the wealth and prosperity of its first owner. Further, the house is historically significant for its association with B.G. Morss, a locally prominent industrialist, who was responsible for establishing the mills and foundries which contributed to the early nineteenth century economic development of the Red Falls area. The property retains its original setting in an austere formal landscape which complements the Greek Revival style structure. The complex also includes four nineteenth century outbuildings, three of which were part of Morss's original dairy farm. Together, the house, outbuildings and landscaping retain integrity of design, materials and craftsmanship and recall the early nineteenth century growth and development of the Red Falls community.

Little is known regarding the life of Red Falls industrialist Burton G. Morss. The owner of a large portion of land within the Hardenbergh Patent, Morss had access to two of the area's most valuable natural resources, vast hemlock forests and fast-moving springs. Along with other industrialists such as Zaddock Pratt, who developed the town of Prattsville, Morss used these resources to establish many profitable commercial enterprises. In the early nineteenth century, he constructed a tannery, foundry and cotton mill along the Batavia Kill at Red Falls and established a community known as "Morrisville" or "Federal City." By 1829 he had also purchased a gristmill, a sawmill and a shingle factory. Burton and his father, Foster, built cottages and a post office for the workers and took an active interest in the development of the community. Morss's fortunes turned sharply downward in the mid-nineteenth century with a decline in the demand for leather, and a flood in the late 1880s, which damaged his mills and other industrial holdings, brought about his financial ruin. Burton G. Morss died in 1890.

Morss built the residence and various outbuildings as a dairy farm during the early nineteenth century. An outstanding example of the Greek Revival style, the house exhibits many of the classic stylistic characteristics including a temple front with pilasters, a recessed side entrance with Ionic columns and a smaller, less pretentious kitchen ell. An emphasis on formality is evident on the facade which is distinguished by the use of horizontal flushboard siding to create the illusion of a smooth masonry front, a stylistic feature associated with the more fully evolved form of Greek temple residences.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Beers, F.W. Atlas of Greene County, New York. 1867, Philadelphia.

Beers, Ellis & Soule.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 6 Acres

Quadrangle name Prattsville, N.Y.

Quadrangle scale 1 : 24,000

UTM References

A

1	8	5	4	9	8	0	0	4	6	8	4	1	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

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E

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F

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G

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H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Site Map

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries NA

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Claire Ross

organization Division for Historic Preservation date 8/83

street & number Agency Bldg. 1 - 13th floor telephone 518-474-0479

city or town Albany, state New York 12238

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Allen Lehman*

title Commissioner

date 8/12/83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Ann Douglas
Keeper of the National Register

date 9/30/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Morss Homestead, Red Falls, NY, Greene County

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

For NPS use only
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The imposing proportions and unusual finely crafted details of the residence reflect Morss's wealth and social standing within the community. The house was built primarily of local materials including hemlock lathe; however, relatively ornate imported details such as carved lintels, mantels and wallpaper also embellish the interior. The property is further distinguished by an austerely formal landscape which enhances the siting of the Greek Revival style structure. Trees were placed along the perimeters of the wide lawn to frame and enhance the "temple effect" of the facade. The outbuildings were positioned so as to minimize their visibility from the front of the house, thus allowing an imposing view without distraction.

Retaining almost complete integrity of siting, design, materials and craftsmanship, the Morss Homestead remains as an exceptional vernacular example of the Greek Revival style and as one of the few surviving complexes with historic associations to the early nineteenth century growth & development of the Red Falls community.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Morss Homestead, Red Falls, Greene Co., NY

Continuation sheet

Item number 11

Page 2

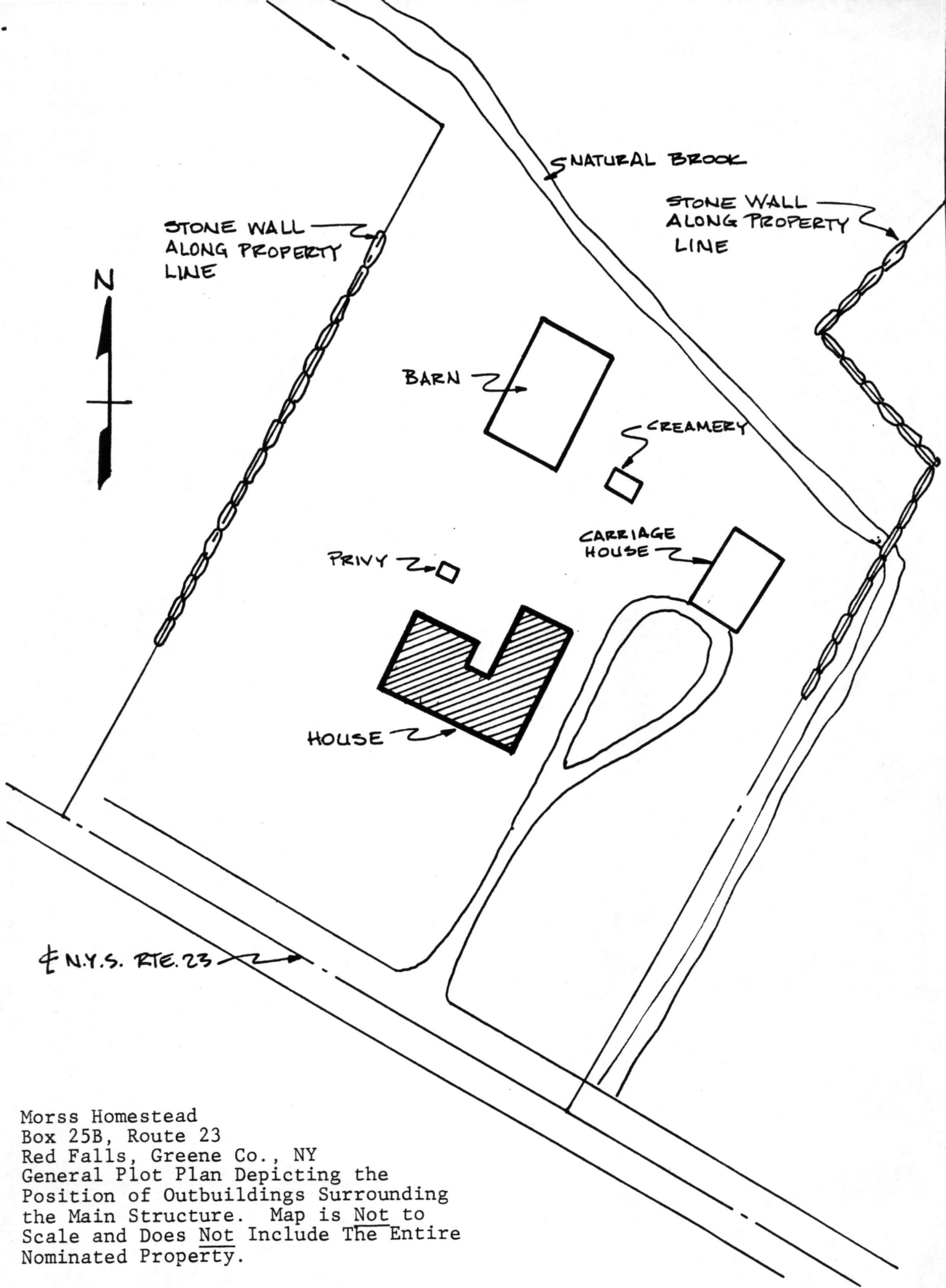
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received

date entered

Draft nomination and research provided by:

Mary Jo Dorko
349 State Street
Albany, NY 12210

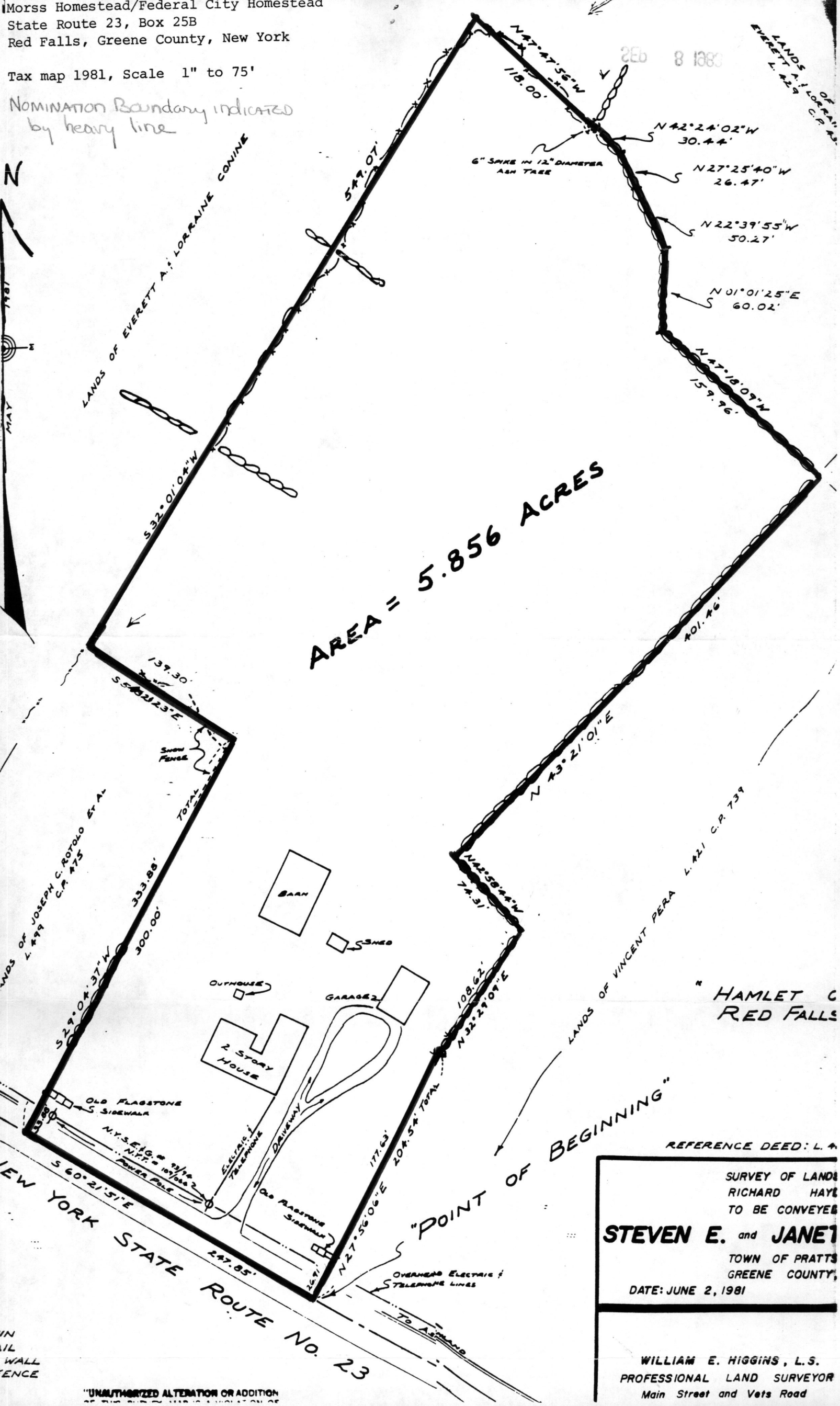
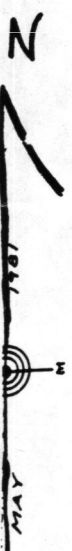


Morss Homestead
 Box 25B, Route 23
 Red Falls, Greene Co., NY
 General Plot Plan Depicting the
 Position of Outbuildings Surrounding
 the Main Structure. Map is Not to
 Scale and Does Not Include The Entire
 Nominated Property.

Morss Homestead/Federal City Homestead
State Route 23, Box 25B
Red Falls, Greene County, New York

Tax map 1981, Scale 1" to 75'

Nomination Boundary indicated
by heavy line



AREA = 5.856 ACRES

2Eb 8 1980

LANDS OF EVERETT A. LORRAINE
EVERETT L. 229 C.P. 42

LANDS OF JOSEPH C. ROTOLO ET AL
L. 499 C.P. 475

LANDS OF VINCENT PERA L. 421 C.P. 739

HAMLET OF RED FALLS

NEW YORK STATE ROUTE NO. 23

REFERENCE DEED: L. 4

SURVEY OF LANDS
RICHARD HAYE
TO BE CONVEYED
STEVEN E. and JANEI
TOWN OF PRATTS
GREENE COUNTY,
DATE: JUNE 2, 1981

WILLIAM E. HIGGINS, L.S.
PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYOR
Main Street and Vets Road

UNAUTHORIZED ALTERATION OR ADDITION
OF THIS SURVEY MAP IS A VIOLATION OF

me
SEP 8 1983

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Morss Homestead/Federal City Homestead
Greene County
NEW YORK

Substantive Review

Working No. 8/18/83
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/7/84
Date Due: 9/15/83 - 10/2/83
Action: ACCEPT 9/30/83
 RETURN
 REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria decent/ABC
Reviewer [Signature]
Discipline [Signature]
Date 9/30/83
_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Condition | Check one | Check one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> altered | |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____



Morss Homestead
Box 25B, Route 23
Red Falls, Greene Co., NY
Photo: S. Snyder, Aug. 1982
Neg: Snyder Residence
130 Cedar St., East
Fleetwood, NY
View: Facade (south)
#1 of 14



Morss Homestead

Box 25B, Rte. 23

Red Falls, Greene Co., NY

Photo: S. Snyder, Aug. 1982

Neg: Snyder Residence

130 Cedar St. East

Fleetwood, NY

View: West elevation

#2 of 14



Morss Homestead
Box 25B, Route 23
~~Red Falls~~, Greene Co., NY
Photo: S. Snyder, Aug. 1982
Neg: Snyder Residence
130 Cedar St., East
Fleetwood, NY
View: North elevation
#3 of 14



Morss Homestead
Box 25B, Rte. 23

Red Falls, Greene Co., NY
Photo: S. Snyder, Aug. 1982
Neg: Snyder Residence
130 Cedar St. East
Fleetwood, NY

View: East elevation

#4 of 14



Morss Homestead
Box 25B, Rte. 23
Red Falls, Greene Co., NY
Photo: S. Snyder, Aug. 1982
Neg: Snyder Residence
130 Cedar ST., East
Fleetwood, NY
View: Detail of Ionic
Capital #5 of 14



Morss Homestead
Box 25B, Route 23
Red Falls, Greene Co., NY
Photo: S. Snyder, Aug. 1982
Neg: Snyder Residence
130 Cedar St. East
Fleetwood, NY
View:Rear Parlor #6 of 14



Morss Homestead

Box 25B, Rte. 23

Red Falls, Greene Co., NY

Photo: S. Snyder, Aug. 1982

Neg: Snyder Residence

130 Cedar St. East

Fleetwood, NY

View: Attic Interior

#7 of 14



Morss Homestead

Box 25B, Route 23

Red Falls, Greene Co., NY

Photo: S. Snyder, Aug. 1982

Neg: Snyder Residence

130 Cedar St. East

Fleetwood, NY

View: Front frieze window

#8 of **14**



Morss Homestead
Box 25B, Route 23
Red Falls, Greene Co, NY
Photo: Snyder, Aug. 1982
Neg: Snyder Residence
130 Cedar St. East
Fleetwood, NY
View: Landscaping of outbldg
#9 of 14



Morss Homestead
Box 25B, Rte.23, *Red Falls*
Greene Co., NY
Photo: S. Snyder, Aug. 1982
Neg: Snyder Residence
130 Cedar St., East
Fleetwood, NY

View: Barn-southwest elev.

#10 of 14



Morss Homestead

Box 25B, Route 23

Red Falls Greene Co., NY

Photo: S. Snyder, Aug. 1982

Neg: Snyder Residence

130 Cedar St. East

Fleetwood, NY

View: Barn-southeast elev.

#11 of 14



Morss Homestead

Box 25B, Route 23

Red Falls, Greene Co., NY

Photo: S. Snyder, Aug. 1982

Neg: SNYder Residence

130 Cedar St. EAST

Fleetwood, NY

View: Carriage House-south

#12 of 14



Morss Homestead

Box 25B, Route 23

Red Falls, Greene Co., NY

Photo: S. Snyder, Aug. 1982

Neg: Snyder Residence

130 Cedar St. East

Fleetwood, NY

View: Creamery-south elev.

#13 of 14



Morss Homestead

Box 25B, Route 23

Red Falls, Greene Co., NY

Photo: S. Snyder, Aug. 1982

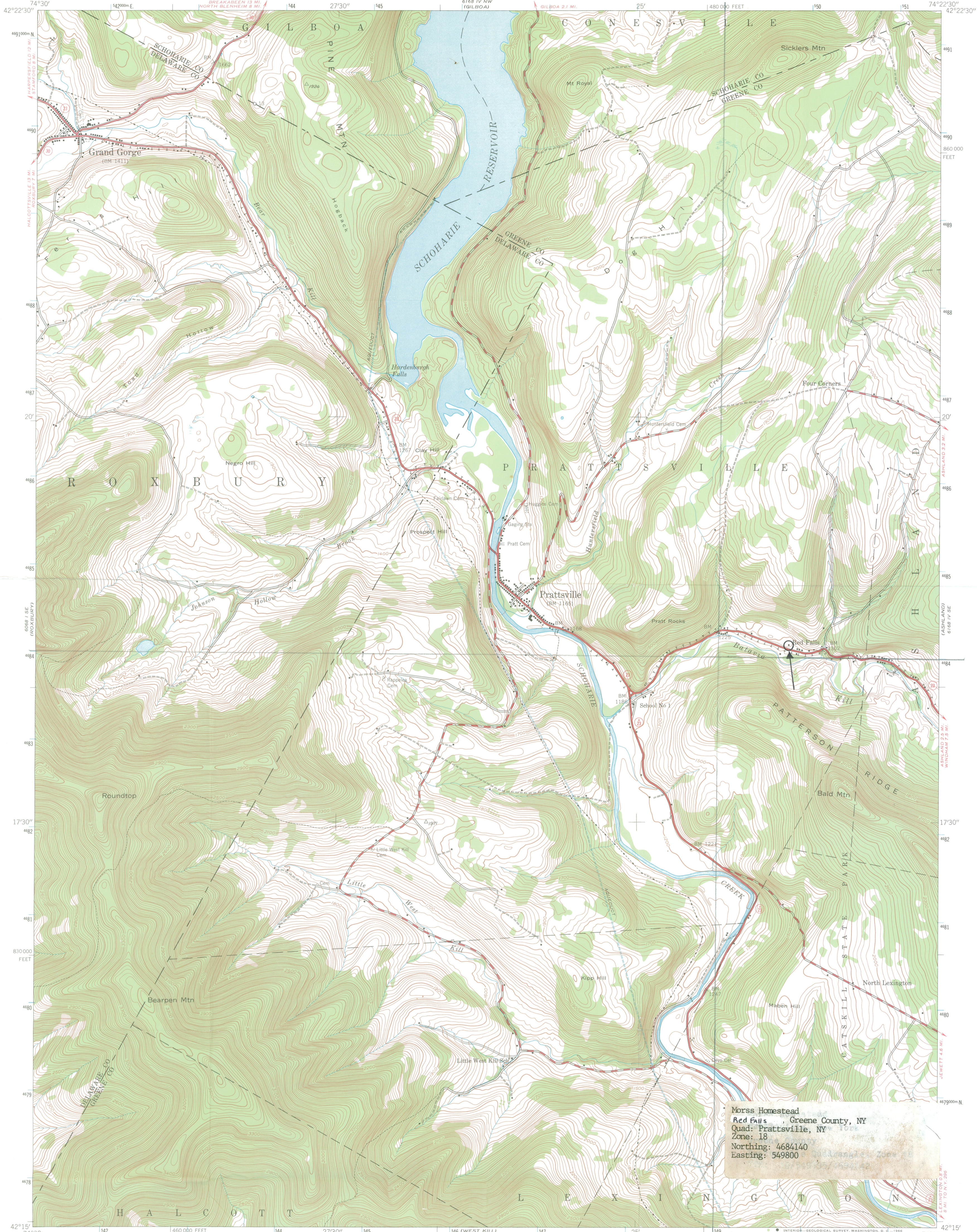
Neg: Snyder Residence

130 Cedar St. East

Fleetwood, NY

View: Privy-south elevation

#14 of 14



Morss Homestead
Red Falls, Greene County, NY
Quad: Prattsville, NY
Zone: 18
Northing: 4684140
Easting: 549800

Mapped by the Army Map Service
Published for civil use by the Geological Survey
Control by USC&GS and TVA
Topography from aerial photographs by photogrammetric methods
Aerial photographs taken 1943. Field check 1945
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on New York coordinate system, east zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 18, shown in blue



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL



PRATTSVILLE, N. Y.
SW/4 GILBOA 15' QUADRANGLE
N4215-W7422.5/7.5

1945

AMS 6168 IV SW - SERIES W821

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST